

(Mr. McKEON), chairman of the Subcommittee on 21st Century competitiveness of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, introduced H.R. 4092, the Working Towards Independence Act.

Let it be known, Madam Speaker, none of these proposals will strengthen families, move families towards self reliance and independence, or reduce poverty. To the contrary, the proposed changes to welfare will erode the successes of the past and severely limit the States' flexibility.

The Republican bills, while largely similar in most respects, promote increased work requirements, introduce an acceleration in the number of families in specified work activities, and devote \$300 million a year to marriage and family formation. The problem with these proposals is that States are expected to make sweeping changes to their programs and move more welfare recipients into work with the current level of funding. Flat level funding will erode the States' ability to provide services such as child care, transportation, vocational training, skills, and barrier assessments, all of the important ingredients of work promotion, poverty reduction, and self-sufficiency.

Recent analyses have indicated that these proposals will cost the States \$15 billion over the next 5 years. Any plan must avoid imposing unfunded costs upon the States that could lead them, shift resources away from low-income working families in order to finance new requirements.

Furthermore, 41 governors from the States, both Republican and Democratic, have voiced their concerns about the fundamental changes proposed in these bills. A new 40-hour work requirement would be an enormous burden on the States, and the new rules would be far too rigid. These proposals decrease State flexibility, one of the champion successes of the past legislation that enabled States to move families off of welfare.

In addition to these concerns, the 40-hour work week is counterproductive and makes no sense, given the rules and limited flexibility. If TANF participants work off their benefits in a work fair or community service job, and if their job is valued or paid at State minimum wage rates, these individuals would earn their benefit in fewer hours than the required 24 hours.

Let me give my colleagues an example. In California, my constituents would work off their benefits in just 19.3 hours in a work fair or community service job. These individuals would then face noncompliance and sanctions. This is true in 26 other States as well. If, on the other hand, a welfare recipient finds an unsubsidized job at a minimum wage, they would earn too much money to qualify for the benefits and would move into a class of the working poor. The proposals really do not add up.

In addition to this dilemma, the proposals do not account for the large

number of families needing child care or transportation in order to work. By demanding increased work requirements and an acceleration in the number of families in specified work activities, the demands for child care and transportation will only increase. Flat level funding will not suffice.

The need, in closing, for child care has increased by 21 percent over the past few years.

Madam Speaker, we need to relook at these proposals, for they simply do not add up.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

UNITED STATES SHOULD STAND WITH ISRAEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of our friend and ally, Israel, for celebrating the 54th Independence Day for the State of Israel. It is important at this time that we stand with our friend and ally, Israel.

There is a famous story that Davy Crockett told. It is in the book "Three Roads to the Alamo." Davy Crockett got into an argument and then there was a brawl afterwards. One of his friends did not help him out and Davy Crockett got kind of beaten up in the brawl. He asked his friend afterwards, how come you did not help me? His friend said, well, it was really controversial and it was kind of a difficult decision, and I was not sure if I wanted to back you up. He said, hey, you do not need friends when everybody is in agreement with you. You do not need friends when everybody thinks what you are doing is wonderful. You need friends when you are in a fight and there is a question over the principles.

We are not the government of Israel. It is a difficult time for Israel. They made some decisions to go after terrorists that were attacking their right to exist, just like we have gone after terrorists that are attacking our right to exist. Whether or not I would have done the completely same methods that Israel has used, I do not know. I think so, but I am not the leader of Israel. Ariel Sharon is the Prime Minister of Israel and the leader of Israel,

and I believe it is important that we stand with them.

One of the debates when I have been in the Middle East is whether or not Israel has displaced the Palestinians. Any student of history, even somebody who has not focused on history, realizes that there has been a conflict, basically, an eternal conflict over who was where. But when the Jews were dispersed around the world and others moved in does not mean that when the Nation of Israel was created in 1948, that suddenly the people who were displaced at that point had any more of a legitimate claim, even in a secular way, than the people who were moved out and dispersed before that.

It is important that we recognize that that is an independent state of Israel. When we met with Dr. Arakat and the Palestinians in Jericho, Dr. Arakat was promoting that they needed a contiguous state, a Palestinian state. Part of the argument that I had was why should we trust you when you still have it in your Constitution that Israel does not have the right to exist. Conflict erupted, verbal conflict in the meeting, because he said that that was not politically possible. But why should Israel trust the words of the Palestinian Authority if they do not grant their right to exist?

Part of the problem is, as we have seen multiple times there, when we pushed and western powers pushed Israel to back off the Golan Heights, people can look right down on Israeli citizens and shoot down on them that the reason that they cannot have a contiguous state is that there is not much water in that area.

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The reason they cannot have a contiguous state is there is not much water in that area. They have water pipes going through. If those things are controlled by people committed to their destruction, they cannot exist as a state.

Furthermore, we have a longtime moral and secular argument about whose capital Jerusalem is. It is a shrine to many nations. We have some conflicts that are not easily reconciled. Israel, unless they have the flexibility to take out the terrorists, will not exist as an independent state. So we can commemorate the independence of Israel, but unless they can make sure they have a water supply that comes, unless they make sure people are not shooting down on them from the heights, people who can hide in terrorist camps, they cannot exist and have an independent state.

Furthermore, we have a lot of whining about how Israel treats the Palestinians. It is tough. Quite frankly, I might handle some of these things slightly differently. But we know this for a fact, Palestinians can become citizens in Israel. They can vote in Israel, in the Israeli elections. They can own property in Israel.

But when we go to the Arab countries around Israel, they treat the Palestinians like dirt. They cannot own land.